



MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 10, 2012
TO: Board of Park Commissioners
FROM: Dennis Cook, Parks Athletics Manager
SUBJECT: Non Tennis Activity on Tennis Courts

Requested Board Action

This is an update briefing on the pilot of Non Tennis Activity on Tennis Courts. The Park Board will host a public hearing and then be asked to make a recommendation supporting the staff recommendation. The Board will hold a public hearing and make a recommendation to the Superintendent on this issue at the May 10 meeting.

Staff Recommendation

The staff recommendation is to make permanent the pilot use of Tennis Court #1 at Cal Anderson Park and the tennis courts at Judkins Park for bike polo and dodgeball.

Project Description and Background

At the October 28, 2010 Park Board Meeting, the Park Board approved an 18 month Dodgeball/Bike Polo pilot program to be held at Bobby Morris Tennis Court #1 and Judkins Tennis Court, ending April 30, 2012. The recommendation came after a public hearing before the Board and extensive written testimony. Please see the motion below:

- Commissioner Jourdan Keith made the following motion: **Allow one court at Cal Anderson Park to be specifically designated for dodgeball and bike polo; and use Judkins Park courts for bike polo. Have this be a pilot project.** The motion was seconded by Commissioner Adams and approved unanimously.

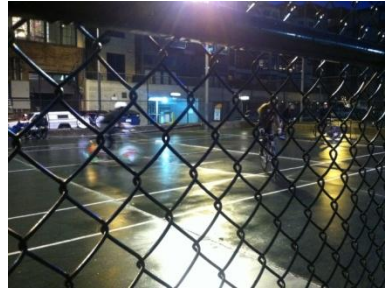
Pilot

During the 18 month pilot, dodgeball and bike polo were allowed at Cal Anderson Park Tennis Court #1 and Judkins Park and Playfield Tennis Court. Cal Anderson was the primary site during the pilot. Parks removed the tennis court net poles and nets from the

Cal Anderson tennis court and removed the tennis nets from Judkins. The leaders of dodgeball and bike polo worked out a schedule that allows each organization adequate use time on Cal Anderson #1.



Bike Polo at Cal Anderson Park



Bike Polo at Cal Anderson Park

The Judkins tennis courts were not used as highly as Bobby Morris, due to the lack of lights at the venue. The primary use of Judkins took place on weekends and later in the spring and summer on weekday evenings. The bike polo organization used wooden planks to divide the courts and keep the ball from rolling into the other court. Two courts were used at Judkins.

Community Concerns

During the 18 month pilot, Seattle Parks and Recreation received four emails and phone calls opposing non tennis activities on tennis courts. The concerns were primarily directed toward the Judkins Tennis Courts.

- June 6, a complaint about dodgeball players drinking beer and being rude.
- July, a complaint about bike polo at Judkins; wants it moved and the courts refurbished within two weeks.
- January 12, a complaint about bike polo at Judkins.
- March 2012, a complaint about bike polo taking over at Judkins.

Impact on Tennis Courts

Judkins Tennis Courts There is minimal if any damage to the courts (please see photo below).



Cal Anderson Tennis Court #1

The color coating was worn before the pilot, damage had already occurred at the court. It was evident that the surface at Judkins is more conducive to wheeled activity because it does not have the color coating. The fencing is in no worse condition than it was at the beginning of the pilot period. The marks are from bicycle tires (please see the photo below).



Other Non Traditional Activities

During the 18 month pilot, other non tennis court activity organizations asked Parks about the possibility of allowing their activities on tennis courts. The Citywide Athletics Office heard from the following organizations:

- Pickleball (representatives made a presentation to the Sports Advisory Council): <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pickleball>.
- Radio Race Cars (representatives made a presentation to the Sports Advisory Council): <http://racing-radio-controlled-cars.com/>.
- Futsal (soccer over a net): <http://www.futsal.com/index.php/history-of-futsal->.
- Handball: http://www.ushandball.org/index.php?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=1.
- In line Roller Hockey: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roller_hockey.

Staff Recommendation (details)

Judkins Park is very suitable for Bike Polo and any other wheeled non tennis court sport. With Garfield, I-90 Lid (across 23rd and Martin Luther King, Jr. Way) and the Amy Yee Tennis Courts within 1.5 miles north, east and south of the Judkins courts, we offer the tennis community reasonable alternatives nearby.

Positives:

1. The court surface is conducive to roller skates and bike tires.
2. The double size court allows for two bike polo courts, and a possible inline skating rink.
3. The location is accessible from the I-90 bike path.
4. It is adjacent to the future skatepark.
5. The park is on a bus line.

6. The sport is a potential revenue generator for large bike polo events and dodgeball tournaments.

Negatives:

1. Continued use for bike polo and dodgeball eliminates two tennis courts (they would need resurfacing to be playable for tennis),
2. There are no lights at venue, which limits the amount of time court can be used during the dark months.
3. A few community members question or disagree with bike polo at Judkins.

In Review:

Parks staff do not believe it is possible for bike polo and tennis to co-exist at Judkins. The courts were not used a lot during the fall and winter months for bike polo because it got dark so early. Weekends were the prime time of use by the bike polo players. The court sat empty but probably no more than if it was just a tennis court during those dark months. Parks staff spoke to Matt Messenger, bike polo leader; he and the group have designed plans to make the court much more conducive to their sport, which would also support skating sports. Parks have not reviewed plans at this time. The sport of bike polo is growing, along with other wheeled sports. Other sports that would like to use tennis courts are inline roller hockey, radio race cars and Futsal (soccer played over a net).

Next Steps

- Issue a news release announcing the Superintendent's decision.
- Contact user groups and individuals who participated in the process.
- Implement process to consider other emerging uses. Consider:
 - Accommodating emerging sports: assess the number of users, whether the activity is concentrated in one sector of the city.
 - Identify the courts that have potential for uses other than tennis, based on use patterns, existing surface, and other factors.
 - Address the issue of the number of courts remaining for tennis use.
 - Assess and develop guidelines for the type of maintenance required for the courts used for activities other than tennis.
 - Consider future fees and charges.